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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 001240

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/28/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GG](#) [RU](#) [AU](#)
SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN RESPONSE TO RUSSIAN RECOGNITION OF SOUTH
OSSETIA AND ABKHAZIA

REF: A. STATE 91894
[1](#)B. VIENNA 1225
[1](#)C. VIENNA 1216

Classified by: Acting Economic-Political Counselor Philip
Kaplan for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Acting Econ/Pol Couns discussed reftel A points August 28 with Franz-Josef Kuglitsch, MFA director for the South Caucasus and Southeast Europe. Kuglitsch acknowledged that he was "shocked" by the Russian decision to recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia. MFA officials had been convinced that the Russians would view such a move as being against their interests. Emboff stressed that the international community needed to take steps to ensure that the Russians come to understand that they have undermined their own long-term interests.

[1](#)2. (C) Kuglitsch said he expects the European Council to issue a strongly worded statement from its September 1 meeting on Georgia. He said he has not yet seen a draft text, but would expect the statement to include the following elements: condemnation of Russia's actions, support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, insistence that Russia comply with the Ceasefire Accord, a call on other nations not to join Russia in recognizing South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and a warning against further actions that could cause instability in the South Caucasus and beyond.

[1](#)3. (C) The most difficult issue, he averred, would be the question of whether to impose sanctions of some kind on Russia. He expected some EU members to propose a suspension of the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. He opined that this was "probably not a good idea," and indicated that the GOA would be reluctant to support initiatives that would "cut off dialogue" with Russia. He said the EU and its member states would continue to insist on Moscow's compliance with the six points of the Ceasefire Accord, in the OSCE and every other possible forum. He said the MFA had requested approval to send up to five Austrian observers to the OSCE mission in Georgia.
Girard-diCarlo